

New Fiction

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achieves not an anti-climax but a triumph more phenomenal than the first. Money flows in, more money than they can comfortably spend in England. So Olivia's evil genius suggests that they shall satisfy their inborn love of roaming with a trip around the world. This would have been a happy thought except for one awkward little fact: As John Briggs, with his British naval ratings, he could have his passport for the asking; but as the non-existent Alexis Triona, alleged naturalized Russian, he found his hands tied. The very word "passport" would start a cycle of inquiries that could only end in exposure. Olivia's heart is set on that round the world trip, so the best Triona can do is to give that fertile brain of his a loose rein, build up imaginary obstacles, invent fantastic financial crises, pyramid his lies higher and higher—and wholly convince Olivia and half convince himself that these wild fictions are the truth.

But the net of circumstance persists in drawing closer. Olivia meets some old friends of her father, army officers who had served in Russia and who chanced to know the deceased owner of the fat little diary, and resent his having been robbed of his meed of fame. There are some situations out of which even a prince of liars cannot extricate himself by any amount of ingeniously twisted words. As for what happens next Mr. Locke had best be left to tell it in his own ingenious way. But this much at least may be said: That he extracts full value from the sound working principle, that in an emergency the general public can be trusted to do the unexpected thing. Alexis Triona continues to ride triumphantly upon the crest of his wave. FREDERIC TABER COOPER.

THEY CALL ME CARPENTER. By Upton Sinclair. Boni & Liveright.

MR. SINCLAIR appends an explanation of this book, and of its purpose, which makes a fairly adequate statement. He says:

We live in an age, the first in human history, when religion is entirely excluded from politics and politics from religion. It may happen, therefore, that millions of men will read this story and think it merely a joke; not realizing that it is a literal translation of the life of the world's greatest revolutionary martyr, the founder of the world's first proletarian party.

And he cites, in detail, chapter and verse from the Gospels and a few from other books of the Bible, with parallel references to the pages of this novel whereon the original is reproduced. If the word translation be taken in a properly broad sense the statement is accurate; it is Mr. Sinclair's version of what the life of Christ might be, or would be, if He were to come again, appearing in a large Western city of to-day. The parallelism of incident and character is close; thus, the part of Mary Magdalene is taken by Mary Magna of the story, a motion picture star and "million dollar vamp." Matthew is impersonated by the devoted stenographer who drops his employment to follow "Mr. Carpenter," John is reincarnated as John Colver, the I. W. W. poet, and so on. The narrative is put in the mouth of the certain young rich man who was told to sell all he had and give to the poor and who didn't altogether relish the advice. The event also follows the Gospel story: "Mr. Carpenter" heals the sick, raises the paralyzed, restores sight to the blind, denounces the money changers in the temple (i. e., the very wealthy magnates of the congregation of the Church of St. Bartholomew), comforts the afflicted, plays with little children, and there is even a modern version of the Lord's Supper. But most of his energy is spent with the "proletariat," the strikers and the Socialist Center, expounding the doctrine of the brotherhood of man.

The part of the mob, Roman and Jewish both, is played by brutal returned soldiers, members of the "Mobland Brigade"—otherwise the American Legion—who are bent upon lynching "Mr. Carpenter" as a "damned Bolshevik Red." He is rescued, however, from the first attempt at martyrdom by a cohort of pseudo Ku Klux Klan warriors, who are really motion picture men employed and directed by the great "Mr. T.-S.," the movieland magnate who is, curiously enough, cast for the part of Peter. Nevertheless, the soldiers



Rafael Sabatini, author of "Captain Blood."

get him and pretty nearly finish him, but then comes a surprise, for "Mr. Carpenter" escapes from them and astonishes the "young rich man" by his anger. The record proceeds:

He raised his clenched hands. "I meant to die for this people! But now—let them die for themselves!" And suddenly he reached out to me in a gesture of frenzy. "Let me get away from them! Anywhere, anyway! Let me go back where I was—where I do not see, where I do not hear, where I do not think! Let me go back to the church!"

And that leads to the unexpected conclusion of his return to a mere stained glass window picture, whence he had come down to the astonishment of the young

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